

SWAMI RAMA-TIRATH

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND TEACHINGS.



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SWAMI RAMA TIRATH. 27

HIS LIFE AND TEACHINGS.

INTRODUCTORY.

FROM the heart of the people of this country once did rise prayers breathing peace for the whole universe. It was when they were tired of war and conquest, it was when the warrior race came home and saw that they had sold their soul for a mess of pottage—earthly empire. When the Aryan mind found that the battles won were really the battles lost, it turned inward. The spirit of renunciation completely vanquished the spirit of conquest in them. Peace and Love spread over the land and made it the holy land of the neighbouring races. From that time on, that page of Indian history has been con-

sidered blank where the life of renunciation is absent. In India, the ideal is not to measure success by the amount of gold one can manage to accumulate, nor even by the amount of knowledge one toils to store, nor by rank, nor by position, but only by the amount of self-knowledge and self-culture. (Man is to be judged not by his outer circumstances but by his inner experiences.) It is the inner man only that is held worshipful. The silent inner life of the sage though by no means eventful to outward seeming, reflected as it is from moment to moment in a smiling profile, kind look, generous heart and tranquil mind is, in fact, the only true life whose evolution mankind ought to study. The story of such a life would consist in recounting the inner experiences of the

saint in the form of his thoughts and teachings and still more in depicting the saint himself with his mystery-opening smiles and glances. Swami Rama's biography is that of the inner man. It is but the silent evolution of his mind, emerging from the world of matter by slow processes of self-realisation and entering into the domain of spirit.

Swami Rama's life is a rural hymn set in the tunes of the prairie and the jungle, singing of universal peace and love. It is the same note that had its birth in the glorious *Upanishads*. Nothing new about it but the singing of it, Swami Rama raised it once again from the bottom of his soul and he poured it forth in savage cries calling man from discord to harmony, from difference to agreement-in-difference from self to self-in-all, from diversity

to unity-in-diversity. He called man away from hatred to love, from war to peace. From him did flow goodwill to all and charity of thought and feeling. He was a poet of the inner man and the inner nature. To him all men and things were divine. "*Tattvamasi*"—"Thou art That," "*Ekamadvityam*"—"One without a Second," these two mantrams may be said to be the two golden wings balanced on which this ethereal *Hamsa* soared every hour of his life into the eternal blue and soaring ever, soared further and further till he was lost in Infinity.

HIS BIRTH AND PERSONALITY.

Swami Rama was born in 1873 at Muraliwala, a small village in the District of Gujranwala, Punjab. He was born in a poor Brahman family. It is said Goswami Brahmans of Muraliwala are the direct descen-

dants of Goswami Tulasi Dass, the famous author of the Hindi Ramayana. His father Goswami Hirananda (had no means of livelihood except) what the spiritual tours undertaken by him to *Peshawar* and *Swat* brought him. He was the family Guru of the Hindus of the North-Western Frontier Province. Goswami Hirananda had to go to his disciples on ministering tours from time to time. Swami Rama's mother died a few days after his birth. He was brought up on cow's milk. It may be remarked here that though a Punjabee, Swami Rama's staple diet was milk and rice. He was very fond of milk and he could drink about 5 seers of it at a time. Swami Rama was thus born under the lowly roof of a poor Brahman family. He became a student at the age of five. His childhood and boyhood

passed in hard study. As he reached the higher classes, his father was not able to support him, and as a student he lived in extreme poverty. The dress of the boy Rama consisted of a shirt, a pair of Punjabee trousers and a small turban, each made of a cheap and very coarse country cloth, the entire outfit costing about Rs. 3. His fellow-students relate that, at times, he would forego his meals for the oil of his mid-night lamp in his college days. Many a time he had to starve for days together without, however, showing the least signs of suffering or sorrow on his face, for he attended College regularly with a calm and peaceful appearance and kept to his studies as usual.

He had a soft handsome face of a typical Aryan cut. The eye-brows arched over deep black eyes,

which showed the mystery and love of his soul. In contrast with a big, broad, prominent forehead, showing high intellectual power, there was feminine softness round his lips. When he was serious, the lower lip pressed against the upper on a small round chin, which betokened indomitable strength of will. As a college boy, he seemed to give no promise of his remarkable after-career, but whosoever saw him even then, was impressed with his angelic nature and with a purity and innocence of life rarely met with. He was bashful like a modest girl. Living as he did in the light of love, he looked transparently pure through his small, frail, fair-coloured body. But under this unassuming humble appearance there lay hidden a remarkable man with some lofty aspirations and noble aims, which the Brahman

boy thought too sacred to be uttered. With tears in his eyes, with the humility of a disciple in his heart, with the silence of a maiden and with the will of a conqueror, this angelic student was toiling like a soldier day and night in the temple of knowledge. He was always ahead of his fellows. His studies were vast. The amount of knowledge and information on literary and philosophic subjects that he commanded as a Swami was marvellous. It seemed as if he was acquainted with the whole range of human thought.

At the age of about twenty, he became M. A. in Mathematics. After that, for four years he served in different capacities as a Professor and a Lecturer. At the end of the year 1899, after a year of his leaving Lahore for the forests, he became a Sanyasin. The marvellous store of

his knowledge was thus gathered by him in the short space of 26 years. Every minute that passed him could not go without paying toll to Swami Rama. Besides passing the University Examinations with great credit and securing high places and scholarships, he had become at home with the writings of Hafiz; Maulana Room, Maghrabi, Umarkhayam and other Sufi masters of Persia. He had waded through the whole literature of Philosophy both Eastern and Western. He had finished many readings of Upanishads in his college days. He was enamoured of the beauties and sweetness of Hindi, Urdu and Punjabee poets.

(The rigour of circumstances and intense work had told on his health.)
When he came out as an M.A., everybody wondered how could life suffer to remain linked to the skeleton of a

body which he carried about. There was hardly any flesh on his bones. His head rested on a thin, bony, crany neck. His voice was then hoarse and he could hardly speak properly. So weak physically was he. But he resolved then to have a strong body. By putting himself through a regular course of physical exercise and overdoses of milk he, within a short time, recovered his health. He delighted in designing new methods of physical exercise. Ever since then, he could never forego his daily exercise. He was seen, even a few minutes before his death, taking as was his wont, his physical exercise. Thus out of a thin frail body, he managed to emerge a strong man of stag-like nimble activity. He was a great and swift walker, He could walk more than 40 miles a day as a

Swami in the Himalayan hills. He won in America a 40 miles race, which he ran out of fun, in competition with some American soldiers, coming two hours ahead of the winner. Once as he was walking fast in San Francisco streets he was accosted by an American with the remark that he walked as if the land belonged to him. "Yes" said Swami Rama smilingly and walked away. He scaled Gangotri, Jumnotri and Badrinath peaks clad in a small strip of a loin cloth and a blanket. He crossed from Jumnotri to Gangotri through glaciers. He lived in snows, slept in caves in thick dreary jungles all alone. The mountain people whom the writer has met and talked with believed the Swami to be a *Deva*, so strong that he would ferry their cattle from the opposite bank to this side of their village across a

swift hill torrent in the rainy season. At midnight, he would leave his *Asana* and go roaming in the dark jungles defying death and fear. Those that have seen him as a starving youth of an extremely frail body when he was a student at Lahore, could not possibly recognise that wan-white, emaciated face in this wild man of the woods, so fearless, so bold, so vehement, so strong and so roseate. His face was now full, beautifully tinted and his eyes half closed with divine intoxication. With all this exuberance of physical and spiritual energy, Swami Rama presented to the world the masterpiece of his lifework, namely, his own personality.

Swami Rama's personality may be described as explosive. He would remain silent for months together as if he had nothing to say. He

remained merged in joy. All of a sudden, he will burst out like a volcano and give out his thoughts in a wild manner. Whenever he spoke or wrote, one could be sure of getting something very refreshing and original. It seems he could not remain long in society without feeling some kind of loss which entailed weariness of soul to him. He would attribute all his little ailments to the "business talks" of men of worldly wisdom that at times gathered around him. He protested against all advice of worldly wisdom. He used to run back to the mountainous solitudes to recover himself. There he would keep pace with running waters, with glorious sky and would lie on rocks for hours together with his eyes closed and his body thrown in the sunlight. The movements of the

roving winds charmed him. He found something more in Nature than our common eyes can see. He was a poet-philosopher of Nature who could not live without its myriad glories. Not only in India but also when he was in America, most of his time he passed in the breezy lap of mountains. He could not stand the noisy streets of trains and tramcars, motors and omnibuses.

It is true that one who loves Nature and through the taste and feelings of poetry enters deep into it, cannot but in some mysterious way reflect its soul in himself. When Swami Rama first came down from the Himalayan glaciers and descended *via* Bhim Tal on the plains at Lucknow, he was photographed. This photo reminds us of the snows, their purity and their transparency. There is something in his expression,

in the soft halo of his body which reflects the grandeur of Nature. He brought with himself, it seems, even the delicate refreshment of the mountain breezes. This peculiar realisation of the *Nature-soul* was one of the secrets of his charming personality. To see him was to see some beautiful scene of Nature. He was an impersonal person. In him the diffused beauty of Nature was so much concentrated in shape that his sight gave a new significance to the stature of the mountain and the pine, to the rustling river, to the green moss, and to everything that is beautiful and fair in God's forest and skies. Swami Rama wore a delicate bloom acquired by him by his constant companionship with Nature and it was, therefore, that he would prefer solitude to society, to keep his coat of light unsoiled.

Swami Rama's highly cultivated emotion formed another attractive feature of his personality. He was verily a man of tears. (As a floating pregnant cloud at the touch of a cold breeze melts down in drizzling rain, so did always Swami Rama melt in tears whenever the thoughts of the day required such a fertiliser. He would pour forth floods of them. There was a roll of seasons in his mind. There was summer, rainy season, autumn, winter and spring. Of these the rainy season was of the longest duration, the next in length was spring and autumn and winter also came in turn. From his eyes trickled all sorts of tears, of Brahm Anand, tears of sad emotions, tears of philosophic melancholy, tears of sympathy, tears at the decay of those who were once good and great, tears of a lover and tears of a beloved.

Deep sincerity rained down from his eyes in such an abundance.) His sweetness was irresistible. Mahomedans and Hindus loved him alike. The people of different races could see and recognise in this man Swami Rama some family likeness with themselves. Americans called him an American, Japanese called him a Japanese, Persians saw a Persian in him. The wonderful realisation of the *Man-soul* made him look like the one who happened to be looking at him.

Closely connected with his sincere emotion was his state of semi-madness. He was so inebriated with his meditations of the divine infinity in which, according to him, the Nature-soul and the Man-soul were one and the same, that at times he seemed mad, his eyes became red, rolling in wild frenzy and his whole

frame shook with terrible earnestness.

"I saw a vision once, and it sometimes re-appears,

I know not if 'twas real, for they said I was not well;

But often as the sun goes down my eyes fill up with tears,

And then that vision comes, and I see my *Floribel*.

The day was going softly down, the breeze had died away.

The waters from the far West came slowly rolling on.

The sky, the clouds, the ocean wave, one molten glory lay,

All kindled into crimson by the deep red Sun. As silently I stood and gazed before the glory passed;

There rose a sad remembrance of days long gone;

My youth, my childhood came again, my mind was overcast.

As I gazed upon the going down of that red Sun.

The past upon my spirit rushed, the dead were standing near.

Their cheeks were warm again with life, their winding sheets were gone.

Their voices rang like marriage-bells once more upon my ear.

Their eyes were gazing there with mine on that red Sun.

Many days have passed since then, many
 chequered years,
 I have wandered far and wide still I fear I am
 not well ;
 For often as the sun goes down my eyes fill up
 with tears,
 And then that vision comes, and I see my
Floribel.

To see Swami Rama was to feel inspired with new ideals, new powers, new visions and new emotions. He might not have spoken but his smiles and his looks would open a new chapter of your consciousness. Besides having a smiling profile, he at times used to be in convulsive fits of laughter. His laughter rang like the chiming of bells. It was the spontaneous gaiety of a natural man. It was the bubbling of the fountains of joy that had welled up in him. He was always merry like birds. Never a frown or a scowl darkened his eyebrows. The writer was a witness of

the marvellous effect of his laughter on some kinds of men. Men would come and he would greet them with nothing but peal after peal of ringing laughter and what would happen? They would immediately bow down to him, confess their inmost guilt and seek protection from sin and darkness. It seems his peals of laughter went searching and touching the inmost secrets of these people's hearts and they had to confess themselves before him feeling that his laughter is that of the man who knows and understands their inmost history.

He was cheerful but as he used to say "never enter into *Rajas* through cheerfulness," his cheerfulness was laced on tears. He always touched his joy with burning rods of wisdom so that his happiness may never get adulterated with *Rajas*. In the

midst of his laughter, he would suddenly become mute, shut his eyes and begin to chant in the most solemn tones the sacred syllable "Om." His cheerfulness was the joy of *jananam*, it was the joy of the supreme bliss, of having seen the self-same divine soul in everything and in himself. He used to say "I am a storm of peace, I am a tempest of joy."

His philosophic melancholy at the unanswerable eternal questions of "where," "whence," and "why" of the universe, the melancholy that falls to the share of all great thinkers and men of great earnestness and sincerity, ending in mere peals of laughter at the shows of the world, gave to many a person, though not in words, nor perhaps in thoughts, and nor even in belief, yet in some other way, the only suitable

reply that men of his consciousness had given before him, the only reply that the human mind could give. It appears that when one thoroughly understands the reality of this seeming world, he cannot but burst out in an unceasing laughter and then never be able to suppress it:—

I laugh and laugh
At Destiny scoff
I thrill creation's aurn
My ocean of wonder
Breaks forth in thunder !
Hallelujah !! Hallelujah !!! *Swami Rama.*

Another feature which contributed to the charm of his very presence was his bold independence of thought, his great towering intellect. Whatever he taught, he had not only thought upon, but he had actually seen its working in his own life. He used to say that he believed in *experimental religion*. According to him the art of living consists in *luminous belief*. Theology has very

little to do with the inner religion of the living man. If you are a living man, test the truth by trusting your life to it. Just as in science, authority has little weight in arriving at truth, so in religion, authority should have little or no weight and religious truth bearing on the nature of inner man must be everybody's own and personal property through self-realisation. This realisation may be got by whatsoever method, the method is of no consequence, because there is no royal road to realisation nor is it possible to make one. One must take his own path and go picking it up as he goes. The so-called guiding by codes is to castrate humanity. Vedas or no Vedas, Quran or no Quran, Bible or no Bible, the man's own inner experiences are the final test of truth. We have nothing to do with the

light of the sun when during the night it is not available, our poor candle is enough to light the path. It is the inner experiences of one's own self that lead to the understanding of the laws of life and all those writings of saints that clash with life itself must finally go to the walls. True education sometimes comes home to a man not through books, not through authority dead or living, but through the rugged life even of a thief or a robber, even of a courtesan and of a galley-slave. Every one must go to God through the failures and successes of his own life. *Life itself is the greatest revelation.*

He used to say the great mistake of the great Shankara was that he hid his own light under a bushel. He preached matters of his own direct realisation in the name of

Vedas and thus deprived the Hindu race of a direct and deep understanding of truth. Better than Shankara in this respect was Mahomed, who proclaimed the truth on the authority of his own realisation and succeeded in making the wild Arabians men of faith. We need not preach truth on authority; for then the preaching of it loses all the forces, the only force that can be given to it, *viz.*, of one's own direct and personal realisation. Books are meant for man, but the dictators have now placed man at the mercy of books. Religious books have to be read like the literature on Botany and Chemistry, but life is to be understood by each one for himself.

Swami Rama had so laid the foundations of his thinking faculty on his own realisation of the truth

of life that his pencil could cross many a great book as small and could sign many a small book as great. It was a pleasure to hear from him occasional talks reviewing men and books. Unfortunately they have not been reported, but those who listened to such discourses of his, know the profundity and depth of his critical faculty with its sympathetic taste.

Swami Rama was very courteous and polite. His perfect manners one can never forget. His reverence for man and woman was of the highest order. He would gild the brow of the meanest sinner with the light of Siva's forehead. Everything was divine. (His manners were not those of a gentleman of fashion.) They were the outcome of his worship. He worshipped man as God-Incarnate and so he worshipped rocks and

trees. The meanest sinner to him was as good as the highest saint, for he was the worshipper of both. Mother is always sacred. His manners, therefore, were acts of worship. This form of man-worship or the worship of the embodied Brahman, he considered to be the essential counterpart of the worship of the Unmanifested. His idolatry consisted in loving man. God-worship may or may not eradicate evil tendencies of the mind, but worship of man as God is bound to clear the mists.

He was on the whole an unostentatious, quiet thinker, who was always lost in his reveries. Whenever he spoke, he found himself unable to give utterance to his thoughts. In his speeches, he has laid out a forest, as it were, and one thinks there is much of the uninteresting, but now and then the majestic scenes.

of towering cryptogamia and pines, snows and water-falls burst upon one's view almost as a surprise, and it is then that he knows the man. It is only then when these majestic ideals spontaneously grow in these speeches and writings that one feels amply rewarded for having had to wade through so much grass and dry pebbles, which afterwards assume a beauty of their own.

He had a message for the people and he has tried to convey it in the three large volumes of lectures and essays, recently published by Lala Amir Chand of Delhi. Excepting a few essays that were published in his life-time, they purport to be shorthand reports of his speeches, delivered mostly in America. One can see the man Swami Rama through these works of his which he never intended to

publish, being as they are mostly home talks.

He was an eloquent man. In the middle of his discourse he would enter deep into the spirit of his sayings and become silent for minutes. together with tears trickling down from his closed eyes and thus not only he himself would go in but he would call in the whole of the audience with himself. A wonderful orator, who at the climax of his oration would sleep in the Divine and also lull his audience into a slumber. When he woke, his eloquence ended in shrieks and cries. Has he spoken in the wilderness? May be, but he poured his whole-soul into the cry.

IN JAPAN AND AMERICA.

Swami Rama after spending two-years in the Himalayas, came down to the plains burning with mission--

ary zeal for scattering the joy that he had found in himself. He sailed for Japan from Calcutta in the year 1903. He was only for about a fortnight in Japan. He was invited twice to speak to Japanese audiences. He spoke in English and even those who did not understand the language felt and remarked that the words of this yellow-robed Sanyasin were like sparks of fire that were being shot out by the red conflagration as the Swami looked to them while standing on the platform in his fire-coloured robe. A Christian paper of Tokyo spoke in high terms about his personality and announced him as the "enthusiastic apostle of Vedanta."

One evening, as he was walking with some of the Indian students then residing in Tokyo, in the midst of an animated conversation he

halted at the crossing of roads and cried out "Oh! the whole world will be converted, the flag of truth will conquer."

On meeting Swami Rama for the first time, Dr. Takakuthsu, Professor of Sanskrit and Eastern Philosophy in the Tokyo Imperial University said to the writer that though he had many an opportunity to see Indian Sadhus and Pandits at Professor Max Muller's in England and also at other places in Germany, yet he had seen no man like Swami Rama. He was the perfect embodiment of Vedanta Philosophy. Mr. Kinza Hirai, the famous Professor of Tokyo, who was the eloquent representative of Buddhism in the Chicago Parliament of Religions, was reminded of the Buddhistic period of Indian history of which he had read such vivid

descriptions in Japanese and Chinese scriptures, when he conversed with Swami Rama. Mr. Hirai always remembered him after he had gone away to America as the "truly inspired Rama."

Swami Rama left Japan in November 1903 for San Francisco. He had no money and no luggage with him. As the steamer reached the harbour, when every one was hurrying about, Swami Rama was standing without any anxiety to land or to stay on board. An American gentleman noticing this strange luminous figure so quaintly dressed in orange and so unperturbed when everybody else was bustling about approached him and asked him a series of questions :

Where is your luggage ?

Rama keeps as much as he can carry himself.

Have you any money ?

No, Rama keeps no money.

Are you landing here then?

Yes.

You must have some friends to help you.

Yes, there is one.

Who is he?

Rama touched the shoulder of the questioner and softly said "You."

This "you" had an electric influence on the questioner and it was the latter who befriended Swami Rama, and looked to his physical needs while in America.

Once again when he was similarly questioned by some other man he said "I live in tune with the inner man. I find there is some one to feed me when I am hungry and some one to give me water when I am thirsty, I need nothing more. I never had any difficulty."

Swami Rama was for about two years in America. Most of this time, he lived in solitude. There he lived a simple life, carrying his own

fuel on his head from the forest. People of California were struck with the indifference with which he treated the eulogies on his work and life and threw hundreds of newspaper cuttings into the Sacramento river for its information. He made a lasting impression on the Americans, but the detailed account of his work in America cannot be summed up here.

Once he lectured in one of the California Universities and it was said that in that lecture he brought out a new chapter of history in tracing how ancient Indian thought went and influenced the higher thought of Europe and America. It was proposed to confer an Honorary Degree of a Doctor on him, which he declined, but the University students honoured him by giving him a *University yell*.

On his way back to India he visited Egypt and lectured in one of the largest mosques before a Mahomedan audience in Persian. Wherever he went he made friends among different sects and creeds, friends who could never forget him, nay, who still cherish his memory with respect.

On return to his native home in the year 1905, he brought two ideas with him (1) *The need of organisation in every department and activity of life* and (2) *the need for united work*. These two points he elaborated in a series of lectures given at different places in the United Provinces.

At one of the meetings in Benares, one of the Benares Pundits remarked that Swami Rama could not be an Acharya of Vedanta without being a master of Sanskrit literature. It

seems after that Swami Rama took seriously to the study of Sanskrit. He began to live at Byas Ashram near Rishikesh and got Ashtadhyai by memory in a few months. He then went through Ramayana and Mahabharata and then he began to study the Vedas in right earnest. The Pundits that met him and heard him at Vasishta Ashram, a place this side Kedarnath in the Himalayas, were wonderstruck with the insight that Swami showed in interpreting Veda Mantras. He was busy reading them and picking out the Mantrams which he thought to be beautiful. At Vasishta Ashram, the Vedas formed the subject of talks. The present writer questioning him on the subject of Swami Dayanand's interpretation of Vedas which seeks to find all truths of physical science in them and all laws of matter and

spirit, Swami Ràma said, "It is given to every one to interpret Vedas or for the matter of that, any book as he liked for his own purpose, to exalt his mind or to criticise it, but no one has any right to thrust his individual meanings as true." Comparing Sayanacharya and Swami Dayananda he said that in the interpretation of the Vedas the latter was nowhere, that he brought out meanings, which were sometimes not at all there in the Mantras and at others looked very much stretched.

There is a good deal of text-torturing now-a-days. Sayanacharya's commentary is the only reliable guide for Vedic study. But if Vedas have to live, they will require an up-to-date interpretation, just as the Bible has undergone various interpretations from age to age.

"Vedas contain the loftiest pray-

ers and hymns in honour of the Divine Truth and as such are the treasure-houses for the spiritual-minded, who will have to dig deep their own minds to come to the pristine innocence and glorious purity of the man when he first saw the phenomena of Nature. At places, the poetry of the Vedas shall always remain unsurpassable."

HIS END.

One day while bathing in the *Billing Ganga* near Tehri Garhwal, Swami Rama was accidentally drowned in October 1906. The last thing that he had written on the day of his death, only a few minutes previous to the sad occurrence was in his vernacular. Its substance in English is, "Oh Death ! Take away this body if you will. I have many more bodies to live with. I can afford to live happily wearing the silver threads

of the moon and the golden rays of the sun. I shall roam free singing in the guise of hilly brooks and streams. I shall be dancing happily in the waves of the sea. I am the graceful gait of the breeze and I am the wind inebriated. These forms of mine are wandering forms of change. I came down from the tops, knocked at doors, awakened the sleeping, consoled one, wiped the tears of another, covered some, took off the veils of others, I touch this and I touch that, I doff my hat and off I am. I keep nothing with me. Nobody can find me."

Thus he clearly foreshadowed the end of which perhaps he was unconscious. A great man was thus taken away by the Ganges and just when he was only thirty-three. He intended to write a book on the "Beauties of Vedic Literature" and

another one that he was contemplating all these years, viz., "The Dynamics of Mind," the books that now lie in his soul.

HIS TEACHINGS.

A reference has already been made to his complete works which, when read all together, can give an idea of his teachings, but the following extracts may give a bird's eye view of his mind.

NATIONAL DHARMA.

O Setting Sun, Thou art going to rise in India. Wilt Thou please carry this message of Rama to that land of glory? May these tear-drops of love be the morning dew in the fields of India? As a Shaiva worships Shiva, a Vaishnava Vishnu, a Christian Christ, a Muhammadan Mahomed, with a heart turned into a "Burning Blush," I see and worship India in the form of a Shaiva, Vaishnava, Christian, Muhammadan, Parsi, Sikh, Sannyasi, Parish or any of *Her* children. I adore Thee in all Thy manifestations, Mother India, Gangaji, my Kali, my Ishth Deva, my Shalagram. While talking about worship says the God who loved to eat the very clay of India, "The difficulty of those whose minds are set on the unmanifested is greater; for the path of the unmanifested is hard for the embodied to reach." Well, all right, Sweet Krishna, mine be the path of adoration of that manifestation Divine of whom it is said, "All his household property consists of a jaded ox, one side of a broken bedstead, an old hatchet, ashes, snakes and empty skull." Is it the *Mahadeva* of *Mahimonastotra*?

No, I mean the living Narayana as the poor starving Hindustani, Indoo. Such is my religion; and for an inhabitant of India this should be the Dharma, Common Path, Practical Vedanta or Divine Love. Mere lukewarm approbation or toleration won't do. I want 'active co-operation from every child of India to spread this dynamic spirit of Nationality. A child can never reach youth except he passes through boyhood. A person can never realize his unity with God, the All, except when unity with the whole nation throbs in every fibre of his frame. Let every son of India stand for the service of the whole, seeing that whole India is embodied in every son. Almost every town, stream, tree, stone and animal is personified and sanctified in India. Is it not high time now to deify the entire motherland and let every partial manifestation inspire us with devotion to the whole? Through Prana Pratishtha Hindus endow with flesh and blood the effigy of Durga. Is it not worthwhile to call forth the inherent glory and evoke fire and life in the more real Durga of Mother India? Let us put out hearts together, the heads and hands will naturally unite.

Beloved orthodox people of India, put into force the Shastras aright, the Apatti Dharma of the country demands of you to relax the stringent caste rules and to subordinate the sharp class distinctions to the national fellow-feeling. Don't you see, India who has held open port to all fugitives and supported so many races and countries, is unable now to give bread to her own children? Let every man have equal liberty to find his own level. Head as high as you please, but feet always on the common ground, never upon anybody's shoulders or neck, even though he be weak or willing.

Young would-be Reformer! decry not the ancient customs and spirituality of India; by introducing a fresh element of discord the Indian people cannot reach Unity. The religion and spirituality of India are not to blame for India's material downfall.

If we are born in critical times of Indian History, let us be thankful, for our opportunities for service are more abundant. The work for us is more unique, more poetic and dynamic. It is said they who sleep well wake

well. India has had a long sleep, her wakefulness is going to be most remarkable for that. All that we have to arouse among the Indu people is a spirit of appreciation and not criticism, the sentiment of fraternity, the instinct of synthesis, the co-ordination of functions and aristocracy of labor.

Oh ! What an infinite amount of energy in the land is just recklessly wasted away in one sect criticising another sect. Let us try to find out the points of contact and emphasize those between us. There are people whom Arya Samaj can reach and Sanatan Dharma cannot, there are others to whom the Brahmo Samaj only appeals, and so with Vaishnavism, etc. What right have I to find fault with those who do not care for the strength and joy which my creed brings ?

To realize God, have Sannyasa spirit, i. e., entire renunciation of self-interest making the little self absolutely at one with the great self of Mother India. To realize God or bliss have the Brahman Spirit dedicating your intellect to thoughts for the advancement of the Nation. To realize bliss you have to possess the Kshatriya spirit, readiness to lay down your life for the country at every second. To realize God you must have true Vaishya spirit holding your property only in trust for the nation. But to realize bliss and Rama in that world or this and to give a living concrete objective reality to your abstract subjective Dharma, you have to work this Sannyasa Spirit, Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaishya, heroism through your hands and feet in the manual labor once relegated to the holy Shudras. The Sannyasi Spirit must be wedded to the Pariah hands. This is the only way, to-day. Wake up, wake up !

Even the foreign countries through their practice teach to-day this Dharma to our India, the only Brahman land in the world.

When a Japanese youth is refused enlistment in the Army on the ground of his obligations to his mother (domestic dharma), the mother commits suicide, sacrificing the lower (domestic) dharma for the higher (national) dharma.

What heroic deeds could compare with the sacrifice of personal, domestic and social Dharmas for the sake of

the national dharma on the part of that Ideal Guru of Glory (Gobind Sing) ?

People hanker after power. What an infinite power can you not find at your command when yourself stands in unity with the self of the whole Nation ? In conclusion let me illustrate this spirit of power in the words of the beautiful Prophet of Islam.

"If the sun stand on my right hand and the moon on my left ordering me to turn back, I could not obey." Om ! Om !

Ram oftentimes uses the word "*Vedant*," a name. It is this name which makes some people prejudiced against hearing anything from Ram. One man comes and he preaches in the name of Buddha ; many people do not like to hear him because he brings to them a name which is not agreeable to their ears. Be more considerate, please. In the 20th century it is high time to rise above names. What Ram brings to you, or what anybody else brings to you, take it on its own merits. Be not confounded by names, be not misled by names. Examine everything by itself, see if it works. Accept not a religion because it is the oldest ; its being the oldest is no proof of its being the true one. Sometimes the oldest houses ought to be pulled down and the oldest clothes must be changed. The latest innovation, if it can stand the test of reason, is as good as the fresh rose bedecked with sparkling dew. Accept not a religion because it is the newest. The newest things are not always the best, not having stood the test of time. Accept not a religion on the ground of its being believed in by a vast majority of mankind, because the vast majority of mankind believe practically in the religion of Satan, in the religion of ignorance. There was a time when the vast majority of mankind believed in slavery, but that could be no proof of slavery being a proper institution. Believe not in a religion on the ground of its being believed in by the chosen few. Sometimes the small minority that accepts a religion is in darkness, misled. Accept not a religion because it comes from a great ascetic, from a man who has renounced every thing ; because we see that there are many ascetics, men who have renounced everything, and yet they know nothing, they

-are veritable fanatics. Accept not a religion because it comes from Princes or Kings. Kings are often enough spiritually poor. Accept not a religion because it comes from a person whose character was the highest; often times people of the grandest character have failed in expounding the truth. A man's digestive power may be exceptionally strong and yet he may not know anything about the process of assimilation. Here is a painter. He gives you a lovely, exquisite, splendid work of art, and yet the painter may be the ugliest man in the world. There are people who are very ugly and yet they promulgate beautiful truths. . . . (Accept a thing and believe in a religion on its own merits. Examine it yourself; Sift it. Sell not your liberty to Buddha, Jesus, Mahomet or Krishna, if Buddha taught that way, or Christ taught this way, or if Mahomet taught in some other way it was all good and all right for them; they lived in other times. They mastered their problems; they judged by their own intellects; it was so grand of them; but you are living to-day, you will have to judge and criticise and examine matters for yourselves. Be free, free to look at every thing by your own light. If your ancestors believed in a particular religion, it was, perhaps, very good for them to believe in that but now your salvation is your own business, your redemption is not the business of your ancestors. They believed in a particular religion, which may or may not have saved them, but you have to work out your own emancipation. Whatever comes before you, examine it *per se*, examine it by yourself, not giving up your freedom. To your ancestors only one particular religion may have been shown: to you all sorts of truths, all sorts of religions, all sorts of philosophy, all sorts of science are being demonstrated. If the religion of your ancestors is yours on the ground of its being laid before you, so is the religion of Buddhism yours on the ground of its being placed before you, so is Vedant yours on the ground of its being put before you.

Truth is nobody's property; truth is not the property of Jesus; we ought not to preach it in the name of Jesus. Truth is not the property of Buddha; we need not preach it in the name of Buddha. It is not the

property of Mahomet; it is not the property of Krishna, or anybody. It is everybody's property. If anybody before basked in the sun's rays you can bathe in the sun to-day. If one man drinks of the fresh waters of the spring you can drink of the same fresh water. Such should your attitude be toward all religions.

Ram brings you a religion which is found in the streets, which is written upon the leaves, which is murmured by the brooks, which is whispered in the winds, which is throbbing in your own veins and arteries; a religion which concerns your business and bosom; a religion which you have not to practise by going into a particular church only, a religion which you have to practise and live in your every day life your hearth in your dining room everywhere you have to live that religion. We might not call it the Vedanta, we might call it by some other name—the term Vedanta simply means the fundamental Truth. The Truth is your own; it is not Ram's more than yours; it does not belong to the Hindu more than to you. It belongs to nobody; everybody and everything belongs to it.

F FEARLESSNESS.

The next point that I will urge upon your attention and I will exhort you to verify by your own experience, is *Fearlessness*. Lions can be tamed by a single glance, enemies can be pacified by a single look, victory can be won by a single dash of fearlessness. I have roamed in the dense valleys of the Himalayas. I have met tigers, bears, wolves and other venomous animals. No harm was done to me. The wild beasts were looked straight in the face, the glances met, the fierce animals were out-scared and the so-called terrible creatures sulked away. Thus it is, be fearless and none can harm you.

WORK FOR ITS OWN SAKE.

Let your work be for work's sake; you must work. In your work should your goal be, and thus Vedant frees you from fretting and worrying desires. This is the meaning of freedom from desires which Vedant preaches. Worry not about the consequence, expect nothing from the people, bother not about favourable reviews of your work or severe criticism thereon. Care not whe-

'ther what you are doing take or not ; think nothing of that. Do the work for its own sake. This way you have to free yourself from desire ; you have not to free yourself from work, but you have to free yourself from yearning restlessness. This way how splendid does your work become. The most effective and best cure for all sorts of distracting passions and temptations is work. But that would be only a negative recommendation. The positive joy that accompanies faithful work is as park of *salvation*, unconscious self-realization. It keeps you pure, untainted and one with Divinity. This happiness is the highest and surest reward of work. Corrupt not this health-bringing heavenly treasure by setting your heart on selfish motives for work. Sordid ambitions and petty hankerings retard rather than accelerate our progress ; outward and concrete allurements are detrimental rather than beneficial to our efficiency of labour. No prize or appreciation can be more benign or salubrious than the immediate joy which accompanies earnest action. Follow, then, action to realize the renunciation, or worship it involves, and not led by the childish frivolities it promises. Feel no responsibility, ask for no reward. *Nowhere*, should your goal be. People say, "First deserve and then desire ;" Vedant say "Deserve only, moved of desiring," "A stone that is fit for the wall will never be found in the way." If you deserve, by an irresistible Divine law, every thing will come to you. If there is a lamp burning, the lamp should go on burning, the lamp need not send any invitation to the moths ; moths will flock to the lamp of their own accord. Where there is a fresh spring, people of their own accord will be drawn to it, the spring need not care a straw for the people. When the moon rises people will be drawn out, of themselves, to enjoy the moonlight. Attack ! Attack ! Hammer on ! Hammer on ! Work, work so as to realize the nothingness of body and the supreme reality of true Self. Thus at the height of apparent activity you will taste Nirvan and Kaivalya, and when in this way you have suffered your personality and ego to be raised on the cross of *labour* success will seek you and there will be no scarcity of people who will come and appre-

cists. People did not accept Christ so long as he was alive; he must be crucified before he is worshipped. Truth crushed to earth shall rise again. No seed can spring up and multiply without suffering destruction as to its form and appearance. So the second essential to success is sacrifice, crucifying the little self, renunciation. Misunderstand not that word "Renunciation." Renunciation does not mean asceticism.

SELF-TRUST.

Thus is self-trust a fundamental principle of bliss. Vedant teaches you not to call yourself a grovelling, sneaking, miserable sinner or wretch. Vedant wants you to believe in your innate power. You are infinite. God Almighty you are, Infinite God you are. Believe that. What an inspiring truth? Believe in the outside and you fail. That is the law.

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One of most cherished desires of Swami Rama Tirath was the founding of an institution "to meet the requirements of the day in India, with the object of spreading love and light." The following is a rough outline of the "Life Institution."

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an account of what he read or had suggested to himself while reading during the day. After hearing such brief reports there will be every night a sifting but respectful conversation under the moderatorship of Ram to harmonise the subjects dwelt upon by the different members of the Institution. Thus will mutual harmony, understanding and love be advanced while each shares the fruits of the mental labour of all trying in return to lay before all the earnings of his own brain work.

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